

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel claims 1-12 without prejudice and add new claims 13-26 as follows.

1. – 12. (Cancelled)

13. (New) A method for load balancing among a plurality of servers in a server bank comprising:

receiving a data packet at a packet forwarding device to be forwarded to one of the plurality of servers in the server bank;

performing a hash function using one or more identifiers for the data packet to generate a hash value;

searching a server bank table for an address of one of the plurality of servers in the server bank using the generated hash value as an index; and

forwarding the data packet to the server in the server bank using the address found in the server bank table.

14. (New) The method of claim 13, wherein performing a hash function using one or more identifiers for the data packet comprises performing a hash function using the data packet's Internet Protocol (IP) source address.

15. (New) The method of claim 13, wherein performing a hash function using one or more identifiers for the data packet comprises performing a hash function using the data packet's Internet Protocol (IP) destination address.

16. (New) The method of claim 13, wherein performing a hash function using one or more identifiers for the data packet comprises performing a hash function using the data packet's Transmission Control Protocol (TCP) source port number.

17. (New) The method of claim 13, wherein performing a hash function using one or more identifiers for the data packet comprises performing a hash function using the data packet's Transmission Control Protocol (TCP) destination port number.

18. (New) The method of claim 13, wherein searching a server bank table for an address of one of the plurality of servers in the server bank comprises searching a server bank table for an Internet Protocol (IP) address of one of the plurality of servers in the server bank.

19. (New) The method of claim 13, wherein searching a server bank table for an address of one of the plurality of servers in the server bank comprises searching a server bank table for a Media Access Control (MAC) address of one of the plurality of servers in the server bank.

20. (New) An article of manufacture comprising:

a machine accessible medium including content that when accessed by a machine causes the machine to perform operations comprising:

receiving a data packet at a packet forwarding device to be forwarded to one of the plurality of servers in the server bank;

performing a hash function using one or more identifiers for the data packet to generate a hash value;

searching a server bank table for an address of one of the plurality of servers in the server bank using the generated hash value as an index; and

forwarding the data packet to the server in the server bank using the address found in the server bank table.

21. (New) The article of manufacture of claim 20, wherein a machine accessible medium including content that when accessed by a machine causes the machine to perform operations comprising performing a hash function using one or more identifiers for the data packet to generate a hash value comprises a machine accessible medium comprising content that when accessed by a machine causes the machine to perform operations comprising performing a hash function using the data packet's Internet Protocol (IP) source address.

22. (New) The article of manufacture of claim 20, wherein a machine accessible medium including content that when accessed by a machine causes the machine to perform operations comprising performing a hash function using one or more identifiers for the data packet to generate a hash value comprises a machine accessible medium comprising content that when accessed by a machine causes the machine to perform operations comprising performing a hash function using the data packet's Internet Protocol (IP) destination address.

23. (New) The article of manufacture of claim 20, wherein a machine accessible medium including content that when accessed by a machine causes the machine to perform operations comprising performing a hash function using one or more identifiers for the data packet to generate a hash value comprises a machine accessible medium comprising content that when

accessed by a machine causes the machine to perform operations comprising performing a hash function using the data packet's Transmission Control Protocol (TCP) source port number.

24. (New) The article of manufacture of claim 20, wherein a machine accessible medium including content that when accessed by a machine causes the machine to perform operations comprising performing a hash function using one or more identifiers for the data packet to generate a hash value comprises a machine accessible medium comprising content that when accessed by a machine causes the machine to perform operations comprising performing a hash function using the data packet's Transmission Control Protocol (TCP) destination port number.

25. (New) The article of manufacture of claim 20, wherein a machine accessible medium including content that when accessed by a machine causes the machine to perform operations comprising searching a server bank table for an address of one of the plurality of servers in the server bank comprises a machine accessible medium comprising content that when accessed by a machine causes the machine to perform operations comprising searching a server bank table for an Internet Protocol (IP) address of one of the plurality of servers in the server bank.

26. (New) The article of manufacture of claim 20, wherein a machine accessible medium including content that when accessed by a machine causes the machine to perform operations comprising searching a server bank table for an address of one of the plurality of servers in the server bank comprises a machine accessible medium comprising content that when accessed by a machine causes the machine to perform operations comprising searching a server bank table for a Media Access Control (MAC) address of one of the plurality of servers in the server bank.